



Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

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Smallpox Virus

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Missouri Dept of Health and Senior Services (800) 392-0272 (24 hours)
State Public Health Laboratory (573) 751-3334 or 751-0633

Contact the Missouri State Public Health Laboratory (MSPHL) to obtain specific instructions prior to collecting any samples.
The MSPHL is not equipped to process any specimens for small pox. All specimens will be transported to the Centers for Disease Control.

Remember that these samples may be highly infective! Extreme caution should be taken in collecting, preparing for shipment and transporting any material suspected of being contaminated with a biological agent.

The following information is meant only as a general guideline.

For information on Smallpox vaccination (Vaccinia) laboratory support from the Missouri State Public Health Laboratory, please [click here](#).

Specimen collection and transport

Clinical:

Uncoagulated blood, serum, drainage from skin lesions/scrapings, touch prep slide from skin lesions.

Specimens should be collected by someone who has recently been vaccinated (or is vaccinated that day) and who wears the following protective equipment:

- Disposable protective latex or vinyl gloves (sterile gloves not required)
- Disposable protective gowns
- N-95 masks or higher
- Protective eyewear
- Shoe covers
- Plastic biohazard bags

To obtain vesicular or pustular fluid, it is often necessary to open lesions with the blunt edge of a scalpel. The fluid can then be harvested on a cotton swab. Scabs can be picked off with forceps. Specimens should be deposited in a vacutainer tube with no transport media and sealed with adhesive tape. This tube, in turn, should be enclosed in a second durable, watertight container. Arrangements will be made to transport the specimens to CDC.

For detailed collection and transport information from the CDC, [click here](#) (PDF format, requires Adobe Acrobat Reader [available here](#)).

Please note:

- Smallpox is spread person to person by droplet or aerosol expelled from the oropharynx of infected person.
- Contaminated clothing or bed linens can also spread the virus.
- Smallpox has a 12-14 day incubation period.
- An individual can be vaccinated up to 3 days after exposure. Vaccination takes 8-10 days to become effective.

To obtain a copy of the "Evaluating Patients for Smallpox" poster from the CDC, [click here](#) (PDF format, requires Adobe Acrobat Reader [available here](#)), or call the CDC at (888) 246-2675.